UNC Asheville dean of students 'no longer employed' after video of DEI comments surface

by Marisa Sardonia
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MARCH 19, 2024 - UNC Asheville. (Photo credit: WLOS staff)

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ASHEVILLE, N.C. (WLOS) — A University of North Carolina Asheville administrator is no longer employed by the university following the release of a secretly-recorded video in which she appears to suggest that the school is not adhering to the UNC System's rules on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs.

Megan Pugh, UNC Asheville's now-former Dean of Students, was recorded by a "hidden camera investigator" with Accuracy in Media, a nonprofit conservative watchdog organization. The platform subsequently posted the video to its **YouTube page**.

In the video, an unidentified interviewer is heard speaking with Pugh on DEI-related subjects

regarding the university. When the cameraperson states, "I'm so glad that you guys are still doing equity work," Pugh responds, "We probably still do anyway, but, you know, gotta keep it quiet[...] But, I love breaking rules."

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Later in the video, the cameraperson says, "Breaking rules, having fun doing it," to which Pugh replies, "You know, until more or less, they get mad at us, but they haven't done it yet."

News 13 reached out to UNCA for comment on the incident, to which the university's spokesperson, Brian Hart, responded that the university is aware of the incident "in which an employee makes comments implying that the university does not comply with UNC System policies or legal requirements and supports employees disregarding such obligations."

> ***"These remarks do not represent the practices of UNC Asheville. The University remains firmly committed to upholding all UNC System policies as well as federal and state laws, both in principle and in practice," Hart wrote. "UNC Asheville takes these comments seriously."***

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Hart confirmed that "following a prompt review of the matter, the individual [Pugh] is no longer employed by the university."

Hart also said that UNCA will now take on a "comprehensive review to reinforce expectations and ensure all employees are aligned with applicable laws and policies."

In May 2024, during a UNC Board of Regents meeting, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors voted 22-2 to **eliminate its DEI program** from the system's 16 campuses. The

program was replaced with a new policy called "Equality Within the University of North Carolina."

All DEI offices and related positions within the UNC System were either removed or adjusted by September 2024.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM DROPS DEI COURSE REQUIREMENT AFTER TRUMP ORDER

Last week, an administrator at UNC Charlotte was also removed from her position following a **separate hidden camera video** by the same watchdog organization.

Janique Sanders, the now-former Assistant Director of Leadership and Community Engagement at UNC Charlotte, was secretly filmed implying that diversity, equity and inclusion work is still active on campus.

"So, we've renamed, we've reorganized, we've recalibrated, so to speak," Sanders said on video.

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UNC Charlotte later announced that the individual involved [Sanders] "is no longer employed by UNC Charlotte." The university has since faced backlash from various groups for its dismissal of Sanders.